

The Michigan affordable housing community is working together to develop a five-year plan that we believe will foster a single community of affordable housing ambassadors to serve the needs of Michigan residents who have the fewest housing options.

The five-year action plan will be developed over the coming year and will be a community plan, not a MSHDA plan. To achieve this goal, we have created workgroups covering affordable housing issues of concern to all of us. Members of all interested organizations were invited to join the workgroup related to their specific concerns. The workgroups are:

- Aging in Place
- Preservation of Federally Assisted Housing
- Public Awareness
- Neighborhood Revitalization and Community Development
- Supportive Housing
- Ending Homelessness
- Homeownership
- Voucher Strategies & Process
- Multifamily Housing
- Land Use
- Detroit Partnership

Recently, on a sunny July day, over 200 representatives from Michigan's affordable housing community gathered to participate in the Five-Year Action Plan Workgroup Kickoff. The purpose of this meeting was to present the vision, goals, principles, and timeline of the workgroups, and to give the participants an opportunity to meet in their various groups for the first time.

All participants were encouraged to bring their ideas to the table so they may be included in the plan. As we move forward together, we want to be sure that, at every turn, people are reaching out: reaching out for perspective, input and participation. It's important for everyone to think outside of the box and not be afraid of change.

Action Plan participants were asked to honor several principles as we create and implement Michigan's Five-Year Affordable Housing Community Action Plan.

First, the mission is paramount: this work is done to improve people's lives. We will engage in both economic and non-economic activities.

Second, we intend to build an inclusive, warm, affordable housing community.

Third, we will have a Culture of Excellence:

- Participants will see themselves as leaders and entrepreneurs.
- We will demonstrate our respect of all participants' perspectives.
- We will promote constructive dialogue.
- We will imbue values of quality:
 - Systems of measurement
 - Systems for Partner feedback
 - Systemic approach to value staff
- Recognition, including national.

Finally, we will continue to value interagency collaboration and foster this throughout the strategic planning process and implementation.

I knew the message was getting through when I overheard comments such as, "This doesn't feel like MSHDA," and "As a builder/developer, the message we got from MSHDA has always been about policy. Now you're asking *us* what we think!"

Through all of this, however, it's important to note that it was not the notion of a plan that brought us together. Instead, we want a common vision, one vision that is created by all constituents in a single broad affordable housing community.

And we want that common vision from a cohesive affordable housing community so that collectively we can maximize our potential to improve the lives of those Michigan citizens who have the fewest housing options.